

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) yesterday attended a community meeting to discuss the future of the Roseburg Oregon VA Medical Center (RVAMC). The meeting was the first public opportunity for veterans, community members, and public officials to comment on the findings of a study concerning future medical service levels at the RVAMC.

The meeting was scheduled by the Veterans' Administration (VA) and the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton. It was attended by more than 400 veterans.

DeFazio chose to participate in the meeting to hear first-hand the concerns of veterans rather than participate in the largely ceremonial activities on the first day of the congressional session. He later took a red-eye flight to Washington, DC, for regular legislative business of the House. DeFazio was sworn-in by Speaker Boehner first thing on Thursday morning.

"I asked for this study to find a way to meet the highest standard of care for our veterans. The recommendations Booz Allen Hamilton put forth do not do that," said DeFazio. "It is simply unacceptable this plan doesn't seriously explore long-term plans to provide the highest standard of care for veterans."

"It was clear from the meeting that there are a number of deficiencies with the study and a

number of issues should be revisited,” DeFazio continued. “I intend to try and re-direct the VA to do that based on the comments we heard from veterans yesterday.”

On April 8, 2010, Congressman DeFazio and Senator Wyden wrote a letter to Secretary of the Veterans’ Affairs Eric Shinseki requesting a suspension of all changes to the Roseburg Oregon VA Medical Center. In the letter, they also asked him to commission an independent study to review the potential changes to the system and the effect they would have on the care provided to local veterans.

“Veterans made their voices known today and I urge Booz Allen Hamilton to take their comments into consideration. I will continue to work with Secretary Shinseki to ensure that veterans in Southwestern Oregon receive the top level of care at the Roseburg VA hospital,” DeFazio said.

DeFazio invites any veterans and their family and friends in the 4th Congressional District to look at summary of the study, which is available at

http://www.visn20.med.va.gov/docs/exec_brief.pdf

. Comments are invited.

□